

To the Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am a parent of two students in the Danbury Public Schools. As you know, each year Danbury experiences increases in student enrollment and corresponding increases in the numbers of students who often require additional services, specifically low income students and English language learners. However, it is getting more and more difficult to provide adequate services when local representatives have to go to Hartford and fight for a piece of an ever-decreasing pie. My own children have attended crowded elementary schools, where art and music classes were confined to a cart that moved from classroom to classroom. Despite the best efforts of administrators and teachers, space is at premium. Students had to be redistricted to other neighborhood schools, across town, in order to ease the over-crowding. We desperately need another middle school building. The repurposed elementary school that serves as the popular magnet middle school has absorbed some growth for now, but it is only a matter of time before we will need more space.

Despite these challenges, we have had a positive experience with the public schools in Danbury and love the fact that the school system is one of the most diverse in the state. In fact, one of the reasons we chose to raise our children in Danbury is because of the integrated and diverse schools. It is precisely for this reason that it is incumbent upon the state to adequately fund our public, community schools. The state must devise a fair funding system that does not continue to short-change growing, diverse districts.

Well-funded public schools are the cornerstone of our communities and our democracy - not charter schools and not voucher programs. As a taxpayer, I expect my tax dollars to be reinvested into my neighborhood schools, which will in turn, be an investment in my community. Our local, public schools serve **everyone**, regardless of their needs and we need to ensure those schools have all the resources they need.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,  
Christina Sweeney  
Danbury, CT